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PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN

Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Zaire, Zambia and Zimbabwe: draft resolution

The girl child

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 50/154 of 21 December 1995, and its resolutions 50/42 of 8 December 1995 and 50/203 of 22 December 1995 concerning the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995,

Recalling also the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, the Plan of Action for Implementing the

World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s of the World Summit for Children, the World Declaration on Education for All and the Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs adopted at the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs,

Welcoming with satisfaction the adoption and dissemination of the Declaration and Agenda for Action of the World Congress against Commercial Sex Exploitation of Children, held at Stockholm from 27 to 31 August 1996, 1/ which constitutes an important contribution to the global efforts aimed at the eradication of such practices,

Noting with appreciation the report of the Secretary-General on the mid-decade review of progress made in achieving the goals of the World Summit for Children, 2/

Welcoming the report of the expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children, 3/

Deeply concerned about discrimination against the girl child and the violation of the rights of the girl child, which often results in less access for girls to education, nutrition, physical and mental health care and to girls enjoying fewer rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood and adolescence than boys and often being subjected to various forms of cultural, social, sexual and economic exploitation and to violence and harmful practices such as early marriage, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection and female genital mutilation,

Reaffirming the equal rights of women and men as enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, and recalling the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,

1. Urges all States to take all necessary measures and to institute legal reforms to ensure the full and equal enjoyment by the girl child of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and to take effective action against violations of those rights and freedoms;

2. Also urges all States to enact and enforce legislation protecting girls from all forms of violence, including female infanticide and prenatal sex selection, genital mutilation, incest, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, child prostitution and child pornography, and to develop age-appropriate safe and confidential programmes and medical, social and psychological support services to assist girls who are subjected to violence;

3. Calls upon all States and international and non-governmental organizations, individually and collectively,

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1/ A/51/385, annex.

2/ A/51/256.

3/ See A/51/306.

(a) To set goals and to develop and implement gender-sensitive strategies to address the rights and needs of children, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to take into account the rights and particular needs of the girl child, especially in education, health and nutrition, and to eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child;

(b) To generate social support for the enforcement of laws on the minimum legal age for marriage, in particular by providing educational opportunities for girls;

(c) To give attention to the rights and needs of adolescent girls, which call for special actions for their protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, harmful cultural practices, teenage pregnancy and vulnerability to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, and for the development of life skills and self-esteem, reaffirming that the advancement and empowerment of women throughout the life cycle must begin with the girl child at all ages;

(d) To take measures to increase awareness of the potential of the girl child to promote gender-sensitive socialization of boys and girls from early childhood, aimed at achieving gender equality, development and peace within the family and community;

(e) To ensure the equal participation of girls and young women on the basis of non-discrimination and as partners with boys and young men in social, economic and political life and in the development of strategies and implementation of actions aimed at achieving gender equality, development and peace;

(f) To strengthen and reorient health education and health services, particularly primary health care programmes, including sexual and reproductive health, and to design quality health programmes that meet the physical and mental needs of girls and that attend to the needs of young expectant and nursing mothers;

4. Urges States to enact and strictly enforce laws to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses, and to enact and strictly enforce laws concerning the minimum legal age of consent and the minimum age for marriage and to raise the minimum age for marriage where necessary;

5. Also urges States to eliminate all barriers so as to enable girls, without exception, to develop their full potential and skills through equal access to education and training;

6. Encourages States to consider ways and means to ensure the continuing education of married women, pregnant women and young mothers;

7. Urges States to take special measures for the protection of children, in particular to protect girls from rape and other forms of sexual abuse and gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict, in line with the recommendations of the expert appointed by the Secretary-General on the impact of armed conflict on children;

8. Also urges States to fulfil the obligations they have undertaken under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to protect women and girls from all forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual trafficking and child prostitution;

9. Further urges States to implement measures in line with the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on violence against women; 4/

10. Requests all States to implement, on an urgent basis, measures to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation, including measures in line with those outlined in the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action;

11. Requests the Secretary-General, as Chairman of the Administrative Committee on Coordination, to ensure that all organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, individually and collectively, in particular the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Health Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, take into account the rights and the particular needs of the girl child, especially in education, health and nutrition, and eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against the girl child in the implementation of the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001;

12. Calls upon the Commission on Human Rights, while considering, in accordance with agreed conclusion 1996/1 of the Economic and Social Council, 5/ its input to the Commission on the Status of Women on ensuring women's equal enjoyment of human rights relating to economic resources, to pay particular attention to all the human rights of the girl child;

13. Calls upon States and international and non-governmental organizations to mobilize all necessary resources, support and efforts to realize the goals, strategic objectives and actions set out in the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

14. Calls upon all States, all the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations to implement commitments to goals and actions relating to the girl child and to report on initiatives and progress to the Commission on the Status of Women at its _____ session, pursuant to the decision of the Commission to review the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action relating to the girl child in 1998.

4/ See E/CN.4/1996/53 and Add.1 and 2.

5/ See A/51/3 (Part I), chap. III, sect. A.